

HANDHELDS

FAQ

Q I have a TomTom satnav and want live traffic updates. How do I go about getting them, and how much will they cost?

A All current TomToms have two ways of receiving traffic information. The first is to subscribe to the TomTom Plus service and then connect your TomTom to your mobile phone via Bluetooth and download traffic information over your phone's data connection. Mobile data is billed by the megabyte downloaded, so downloading traffic data over your mobile connection could be very expensive if you don't have an unlimited data plan.

If you're worried about data costs, get a satnav with a TMC receiver, which receives traffic information from FM radio broadcasts. Some satnavs, such as the 920T (above), come with a TMC receiver, but if you have a TomTom One 3rd Edition, One XL, Go 510, 520, 710, 720 or 910, you can use TomTom's RDS-TMC Traffic receiver (9V00.017), which costs £35 from www.lambda-tek.com/componentsshop.

Chris Finnamore

Labs Manager

chris@computershopper.co.uk

TOMTOM Go 920T

★★★★

£310 inc VAT
From www.ebuyer.com

TomTom's Go 720 (below) was our favourite satnav of last year thanks to its easy navigation and MapShare feature, which lets you correct mapping errors on the move. The 920T is TomTom's latest satnav, and sits above the 720 in its standalone satnav range.

The two are very similar, but while the 720 has full maps of Western Europe, the 920T also comes with full street-level maps of the US and Canada on its 4GB of internal memory, and there's an SD card slot for any other maps you may want to use. The 920T looks almost identical to the 720. It's the same shape and size and has the same 4.3in 480x272-resolution display. A superficial difference is the textured rubber back, which makes it feel more expensive than the 720.

Fixing the 920T to your car's windscreen is tricky, as the unit detaches too easily from the mount as you press the suction cup to your windscreen. The mount stayed in place once we'd attached it and didn't fall off while we were driving.

The 920T has the familiar TomTom interface with its large, colourful icons and finger-friendly operation. The menu responded instantly to finger presses, and everything is clearly laid out in menus and sub-menus. The 920T comes with a Bluetooth remote control, which could be useful if your car's windscreen is particularly far away.

Planning a route is easy: you can navigate to an address, postcode or city centre or simply click on a point on your map to act as your destination. The 920T also made a good job of navigating us around London. The 3D display isn't quite as clear as the Garmin 610T's (opposite), but the map screen shows far more information about your trip.

SUMMARY

- ✓ Simple interface
- ✓ Clear navigation
- ✗ Very expensive

STANDALONE SATNAV 4.3in 480x272 display, integrated SiRFstar III receiver, TomTom Navigator 7 software, Europe, US, Canada maps
PART CODE 6M00.913
DETAILS www.tomtom.com



Along with a clear voice prompt, the next turn is described by a diagram showing the type of turn and the distance to it. The 920T tried to send us the wrong way down a one-way street at one point, but quickly calculated an alternative when we ignored it. Thanks to the 920T's MapShare feature, we were able to correct this map error when we got home and upload the correction to TomTom's servers for other users to download.

The 920T will warn you of any upcoming speed cameras, and it has two ways of receiving traffic information. You can either use the supplied TMC antenna, which receives information from RDS FM radio, or connect it to your phone via Bluetooth and download the information over your data connection, using the Traffic subscription service. The 920T can act as a Bluetooth hands-free kit for making phone calls. There's a great text-to-speech converter for reading

out road names, and its voice recognition feature for speaking your destination worked surprisingly well.

TomTom's Go 920T is an excellent satnav unit, but it's expensive if you don't need maps of the US and Canada. Most people would be better off with TomTom's 720T, which has full European maps and a TMC receiver and costs £247 from www.handtec.co.uk.

Chris Finnamore

Also consider...

TOMTOM Go 720

★★★★★

£215 inc VAT
From www.ebuyer.com



TomTom's Go 720 is an excellent navigator with full maps of Western Europe, a large screen and clear voice prompts. Its most impressive aspect is the Map Share feature, which lets you correct map errors on the device and even upload them to TomTom's servers for other TomTom owners to download. It also has Bluetooth, an FM transmitter and voice recognition, all of which make it the best satnav available.



STANDALONE SATNAV 4.3in 480x272 resolution LCD, TomTom Navigator software, TeleAtlas Western European maps, 2GB internal storage, SD card slot, Bluetooth, FM transmitter, 118x24x83mm, 220g
PART CODE 1M00.760 DETAILS www.tomtom.com
FULL REVIEW Nov 2007

APPLE iPhone

★★★★★

£269 on £35-a-month contract
From <http://store.apple.com/App/WebKitObjects/ukstore>

Even after all the hype, the iPhone doesn't disappoint. It's a hugely capable smartphone with a superbly designed interface, powerful messaging capabilities and the best smartphone web browser available. It's not perfect – the recessed headphone socket means you can't use your own headphones without an ugly adaptor, and the internet browser is hobbled by the lack of 3G. It will also cost you £900 over the 18-month contract. However, it's still the best smartphone we've seen.



SMARTPHONE Quad-band GSM, GPRS, EDGE, 3½in 320x480-resolution LCD, 2-megapixel camera, 8GB storage, USB, Bluetooth, 802.11b/g connectivity, 8 hours' talktime, 10 days' standby, 135g
PART CODE MB213B/A DETAILS www.apple.com/uk
FULL REVIEW Mar 2008

GARMIN nuvi 610T

★★★★★

£190 inc VAT
From www.kikatek.com

While the 920T (opposite) is TomTom's most expensive satnav, the 610T sits in the middle of Garmin's range. It's a widescreen device with UK and Ireland maps plus a TMC antenna, so it can receive traffic information from FM broadcasts.

The 610T looks and feels like a high-quality gadget. Both the unit and the windscreen mount feel well made, and the 610T attaches far more securely to its mount than the Go 920T does. The TMC module and cigarette lighter charger are combined in a single unit that plugs into the windscreen mount, and the TMC receiver's aerial wire sticks to your windscreen with suction cups.

The 610T has a fantastic screen, with beautifully drawn icons and vibrant colours. Its interface is slightly less responsive than the TomTom's, but it's still easy to use. You can navigate to an address, a city centre or a point of interest such as a restaurant, or just pick a point on the map. The unit narrows down the list of possible destinations as you type and presents a shortlist of destinations once it has enough information.

The 610T has a fantastic 3D map display. It updates smoothly and is bright and clear, so you can easily tell where you need to go. The unit needs its map display to be clear, though, as there's not much additional information on the screen. The map display shows you the distance to the next turning, but not what kind of turning it is, and there's no information on your arrival time as the TomTom unit provides. The 610T didn't encounter any major problems on our test route, and



was particularly good at telling us to keep left or right to make sure we were in the right lane.

The 610T gets its traffic information from a TMC antenna, which you attach to your windscreen to receive RDS traffic information. It also has Bluetooth, so you can connect the satnav to your mobile phone and use it as a hands-free kit. As long as your phone supports it, you can access your address book from the 610T's phone menu, and even write and send text messages with the touch screen. The 610T also has Garmin's usual Travel Kit section, where you'll find useful applications such as a world clock, a currency and unit converter and an audiobook player. You can buy extra applications, such as language and travel guides, from the Garmin website.

Thanks to its large screen, clear interface and gorgeous mapping view, Garmin's nuvi 610T is a pleasure to use and a competent navigator. It's also good value for a satnav with an integrated TMC traffic receiver and has some useful extras, but TomTom's 720 is only slightly more expensive, has European maps and is a better navigator.

Chris Finnamore

SUMMARY

- ✓ Very clear map display
- ✓ Well made
- ✗ No European maps

STANDALONE SATNAV 4.3in
480x272 display, integrated SiRFstar III
receiver, Garmin City Navigator 4.1
software, UK & Ireland maps
PART CODE 010-00540-24
DETAILS www.garmin.co.uk

CHOOSING A... Satnav

Follow the steps to find your ideal specs

MAP COVERAGE: UK and Ireland

SCREEN SIZE: 3½in

POSTCODE SUPPORT: Seven characters

TRAFFIC DATA: None

Recommended minimum in grey

1 A satnav with the minimum specifications listed above will cost you around £130.

It's a standalone device, so you get everything you need in one compact handheld unit. Its screen is not particularly big or clear, and it will be quite slow at calculating routes. It has UK and Ireland maps only, so you can't use it in other parts of the world.

If you've got a PDA or smartphone, you can buy the software, maps and, if needed, GPS receiver in a kit. This will convert your handheld into a satnav with similar specifications to those listed above. The cost will be similar, too.

2 To travel further afield than the UK or Ireland, you'll need new maps. These are usually available from the manufacturer at an extra cost. When you buy the maps, make sure you've got a memory card big enough to store them, or enough memory on your PDA or smartphone.

Alternatively, you can save a bit of money by buying a satnav that comes with a wider choice of maps in the first place.

3 Want quicker route calculation and a better display? Spend a little more on a satnav with a quicker processor; a 4in screen or bigger with a resolution of 480x272 will give you plenty of space for detailed maps. If you're using a PDA or smartphone and it seems slow, consider upgrading to a newer model with a quicker processor and a screen with a higher resolution.

4 If you travel a lot, real-time traffic information is essential. The most common way to get updates is by connecting to your mobile phone and downloading the latest information. This data is charged at normal network rates, though.

Some high-end standalone satnavs have a TMC chip, which receives traffic information over the FM radio network for free.

Several high-end standalone units have integrated microphones and can be used to make hands-free phone calls over a Bluetooth connection. To take advantage, you'll need a compatible mobile phone with Bluetooth.

ARCHOS 405

★★★★★

£99 inc VAT
From www.kikatek.com

Archos's latest budget portable media player replaces the 404.

Unlike the 404, it has 2GB of flash storage instead of a 30GB hard disk, but it can take up to 16GB of extra storage in its SDHC card slot. The player is easy to use, and video looks good on the bright and clear screen. It's good value, and will become better value as SDHC cards drop in price.



PORTABLE MEDIA PLAYER 3½in 320x240 resolution LCD, 2GB storage, SDHC card slot, plays MPEG4 (DivX, XviD), WMV, MPEG1 and MPEG2 with optional plug-in (all up to DVD resolution), plays MP3, WMA, protected WMA, Wav, AAC with optional plug-in, five hours' video playback, 16 hours' audio playback, USB2, 100x13x78mm, 146g PART CODE 105914EU V2 DETAILS www.archos.com FULL REVIEW Jan 2008

PALM Treo 500v

★★★★★

Free on £20-per-month contract
From www.vodafone.co.uk



Palm's Treo 500v is a great-looking Windows Mobile phone with a QWERTY keyboard. Palm has heavily customised the operating system, so it's far simpler to use than most Windows Mobile phones. The keyboard is easy to use, and the Google Maps and Messenger applications are particularly useful. It's also free on a cheap mobile contract, which makes it great value.



SMARTPHONE Tri-band, 3G, GPRS, 2½in 320x240 resolution LCD, 2-megapixel camera, 150MB storage, microSD card slot, USB, Bluetooth connectivity, 4½ hours' talk time, 10 days' standby, 120g PART CODE 1060IE-VFN DETAILS www.palm.com REVIEW Dec 2007